

Division 45: Registrar, Western Australian Industrial Relations Commission, \$12 754 000 —

Mr I.M. Britza, Chairman.

Mr P.T. Miles, Parliamentary Secretary representing the Minister for Commerce.

Ms S. Bastian, Chief Executive Officer, Department of the Registrar.

Mrs L. Mathew, Chief Finance Officer, Department of the Registrar.

Mrs S.L. Anderson, Acting Deputy Registrar, Department of the Registrar.

Mr P. Groves, Principal Policy Adviser to the Minister for Commerce.

Mr M. Connolly, Principal Policy Adviser to the Minister for Commerce.

[Witnesses introduced.]

The CHAIR: Member for Mirrabooka.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: I refer to outcomes and key effectiveness indicators on page 509 of the *Budget Statements*. In 2013–14 there was a 95 per cent and 96 per cent satisfaction rate respectively for the timeliness and accuracy of information provided, but since then those figures have gone down to 90 per cent. In that time, have there been more or fewer applications, mediations, hearings, commission in court sessions and other proceedings before the commission? If there were fewer in that time, why have the key efficiency indicators declined?

Mr P.T. MILES: I thank the member. The member can slow down on the talking!

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: She gets it!

Mr P.T. MILES: I refer to the CEO, Susan Bastian, who will give a detailed answer.

Ms S. Bastian: In essence, our applications have become fairly static over the last number of years. Each year we average around 900 to 1 000 applications across the commission. How that relates to our efficiency will obviously depend on a number of factors, including, obviously, the resources available to deal with inquiries at the time and how we manage that response time in terms of the degree of complexity of what is required. Our survey field is relatively small, so if we fail to meet someone's expectations in a short period, it reflects quite dramatically on our key performance indicators in that regard.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: There are on average 900 to 1 000 applications. How many of those applications go to conciliation, how many go to mediation, how many go to hearing and how many go to commission in court sessions?

Ms S. Bastian: I can go through a bit of a breakdown of the commission application numbers with the member.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: Or it could be given as supplementary information.

Ms S. Bastian: It would be easier if I could give the breakdown as supplementary information, because it is a fairly large breakdown of the application codes and how they are defined.

Mr P.T. MILES: Would the member prefer that?

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: Yes, please.

Mr P.T. MILES: I am happy to provide by way of supplementary information the breakdown of the application times and types.

[*Supplementary Information No A12.*]

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: I again refer to the outcomes and key effectiveness indicators. I have had complaints to my office that the commission no longer assists people in their applications against unfair dismissals. Is that the case? My recollection is that if someone goes to the front desk, often staff will assist them, because under section 29 of the Industrial Relations Act, an individual can submit their own unfair dismissal application and they are often assisted with that application. Is that the case?

Mr P.T. MILES: I am not aware of that. I will ask Susan.

Ms S. Bastian: If I can just clarify, obviously, the registry is the repository for all applications filed to the commission, including unfair dismissals. Registry staff do not give legal advice on any matters, but they certainly assist all parties presenting to the counter at the registry in filing the applications. We refer them to various avenues for assistance, but we do not give legal advice per se. The registry staff are quite clear as to what they can and cannot do in that case.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: When referring people to various places, are statistics kept on where they are referred to, and are they referred to the Employment Law Centre?

Ms S. Bastian: Yes, we do keep statistics. Some of them I do not have on me, but I can obviously supply them if necessary. We do refer matters to the Employment Law Centre, the Citizens Advice Bureau if necessary, and obviously to industrial agents and lawyers.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: Can I get those statistics as supplementary information, please?

Mr P.T. MILES: I am not sure. I am happy to provide the information! I knew that was coming as soon as I heard the question. I will provide the statistics on the referral to agencies such as Legal Aid, the Employment Law Centre and any other referral that may go on. We will provide statistics by agency.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: By application and where they are referred to.

Mr P.T. MILES: Yes.

[Supplementary Information No A13.]

Ms L.L. BAKER: I refer to page 508.

Mr P.T. MILES: We have a page number!

Ms L.L. BAKER: The parliamentary secretary is possibly already there. I want to ask questions about the targeted voluntary separation scheme and the workforce renewal policy under the heading “Spending Changes”. Firstly, I have quite a simple question about the targeted voluntary separation scheme and the estimated actual figure of \$86 000 for 2014–15. How many employees have accepted the offer of voluntary separation?

Mr P.T. MILES: I will give a brief answer. It is part of the implementation of the Treasury workforce renewal policy. I understand that in this case the \$86 000 was provided to the agency to fund a severance for a chief information officer—yes, one officer—whose position became redundant on 13 March.

Ms L.L. BAKER: I have a further question about the workforce renewal policy. Is the estimated \$20 000 an amount saved by employing someone at a lower salary than that of the person who left?

Mr P.T. MILES: No, that is not the case at all. In this particular case, the workforce renewal policy pretty much takes this up. There are some positions within the registrar’s office that are not filled and those FTE counts are taken off. They are people who are not there now, so those positions will just not be filled.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: The chief information officer has been gotten rid of and the agency’s major savings are listed under the line item “ICT Savings and Reforms”. How will ICT infrastructure be increased without a chief information officer?

Mr P.T. MILES: For the detail of the answer, I refer to Susan Bastian.

Ms S. Bastian: Part of the process is that our information technology is being reviewed and we are migrating to the cloud. That process will basically be flattened.

Mr P.T. MILES: The cloud will be flattened?

Ms S. Bastian: Yes, the IT staffing requirements will be.

The appropriation was recommended.

Meeting suspended from 12.58 to 2.00 pm